



Area: 143,100 sq km
Capital: Dushanbe
Population: 6,578,681
Population Growth Rate: 2.12% (2001 est)
Ethnic groups: Tajik 64.9%, Uzbek 25%, Russian 3.5% (declining because of emigration), other 6.6%
Life Expectancy: male 61.09 yrs; female 67.42 yrs
Birth Rate: 33.23 births/1,000 population
Infant Mortality: 116.09 deaths/1,000 live births
Per Capita Income: \$286 (IMF World Economic Outlook; 2002 estimate)
Religion: Sunni Muslim 80%, Shi'a Muslim 5%
Language: Tajik (official), Russian widely used in government and business
Literacy: total 98%; male 99%; female 97%



President: Emomali Rahmonov
 Prime Minister: Oqil Oqilov
 Ambassador to the US: Rashid Alimov

Development Challenge

Tajikistan is a front line state in the War on Terrorism and, despite risks from its own Islamists, quickly gave the U.S. necessary access for the intervention in Afghanistan. Its role in the conflict and humanitarian relief has been essential. The most disadvantaged of the Central Asian republics, Tajikistan has limited resources, is landlocked with few transportation links, was ravaged by several years of civil war, and is one of the poorest countries in Asia. Lawlessness and trafficking in both arms and drugs remain a U.S. concern.

Notwithstanding its disadvantages, Tajikistan is successfully, if haltingly, making a transition to normalcy, civil order and democracy. Despite several potentially destabilizing events during 2001, such as the assassination of cabinet officials by unknown assailants, the various parties remain committed to peace even as they struggle for influence within the political landscape. The government continues to work to maintain a balance between various factions, including from the president's party and former opposition members integrated into the government following the 1997 Peace Accord. The peace process resulted in a unique coalition government (of Islamists and former Communists), and the Islamists are a vocal opposition. Yet, governance and rule of law remain weak. In 2001, Freedom House characterized Tajikistan as "not free", and its political rights and civil liberties ratings are both 6 out of 7, with 7 the lowest degree of freedom.

Corruption and local abuse of power are pervasive. Anecdotal evidence suggests that bribery is necessary for most transactions with the government, as well as for health services and training. Weak government institutions, deteriorated infrastructure and social services, and a largely subsistence (and criminalized) economy limit the pace of reform. Reforms are, however, moving forward, and economy grew modestly by about 10% last year. Since privatization began in 1991, Tajikistan has privatized nearly 5,500, an estimated 83%, of its small state-owned properties. The agricultural sector, which employs over 60% of the population, is seriously constrained by the deterioration of the country's irrigation infrastructure and a lack of quality inputs. The economy as a whole remains overly dependent on its two main exports, cotton and aluminum, the earnings from which are controlled by politically connected elites. Tajikistan has the lowest per capita GDP (\$286) among the 15 former Soviet republics, and inflation in 2001 was 35.5%. Thus far, the government has not been able to establish the rule of law sufficiently to attract the domestic and foreign investment needed to spur economic growth. The perceived inability of the government to prevent either Islamic extremists or drug traffickers from transiting prompted the Government of Uzbekistan to severely restrict movements across their common border, effectively shutting off much of Tajikistan's international trade and migratory labor. Two successive years of drought have further set back the country's economic recovery.

Tajikistan's social indicators reflect the seriousness of the problem it faces: 80% of the population is below the poverty line, with 17% in extreme poverty. A recent national nutritional assessment found 17.3% acute malnutrition, with 4.2% severe malnutrition, and 37.9% chronic malnutrition. Tajikistan has the highest rates of infant mortality in Central Asia, with an estimated 116 deaths per every 1,000 live births. According to World Bank estimates, Tajikistan's total external debt is slightly over \$1.2 billion, 129 percent of GDP, mostly to Russia and Uzbekistan. Debt servicing is expected to require 50% of total government revenues in 2002.

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Overview of USAID's Focus in Tajikistan

Economic Reform and Private Sector Development Despite the government's willingness to reform its economy, political, and social instability remained a serious obstacle to the successful implementation of USAID reforms. In FY 2001, 735 Tajik entrepreneurs were trained in western business methods, and USAID training also helped 622 (49% women) bookkeepers become professional accountants, practitioners, and technicians. Similarly, EdNet watched network membership grow to 14 universities in less than a year, and supported two Visiting International Professors (VIPs). These VIPs helped develop their respective departments and delivered training and seminars to students and faculty in modern business principles and market economics. Tajikistan's leading accounting association qualified for membership in the International Council of Certified Accountants and Auditors (ICCAA). ICCAA is establishing an internationally recognized education, examination, and certification program in the Russian language. USAID worked broadly with the Tajik judiciary to create a more transparent and orderly system of justice. Advisors created a legal database of Tajik laws and normative acts that is the most comprehensive collection of its kind in Tajikistan. USAID advisors also assisted in the preparation of draft language for Intellectual Property Rights in the Tajik Civil Code. USAID played a key role in developing and implementing a successful examination process for prospective and sitting Tajik judges in FY 2001 and trained a core group of Tajik judges to establish an institutional judicial training mechanism. A court computerization program was launched at the City Court of Dushanbe, and training was provided to Dushanbe City Court and Council of Justice personnel which enables them to effectively use the legal database and computer equipment.

Water and Energy Management Up until now, USAID has had very few water and energy activities in Tajikistan due to security concerns and limited access to water and energy officials by advisors. Out of country training was the main focus of activities. With the easing of travel restrictions, we expect a significant increase in activities, especially in water. Staff of the Tajik National Hydromet Service are full participants in the regional snowmelt runoff committee that meets semi-annually to improve water allocations for the Central Asia region. They have begun collecting and processing water data for which USAID provided equipment and training. Several water courses were funded by USAID in cooperation with the Canadian Agency for International Development, through which Tajik water officials and managers better acquainted themselves with international water law, transboundary water management, and integrated water practices to improve irrigation efficiency. By the completion date of the activity, water managers should have the necessary tools and training to better collect, communicate and process water data resulting in improved allocations and overall management of the resource. Also, water and energy agreements will be based more on objective data and standards, thereby mitigating their potential for conflict.

Strengthening Democratic Culture and Institutions Despite the difficult travel situation to and within Tajikistan (and the security situation which demands restricted travel), support to Tajikistan's NGOs led to a marked improvement in NGO advocacy, service provision, and organizational capacity. The first independent radio station in Tajikistan, Radio Tiroz, opened in Khojand. Recommendations made by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Working Groups on public sector reform and improving parliamentary and judicial professionalism and independence were accepted by the President. USAID implementing partners ensured the participation of parliamentarians, judges, and NGOs in the process. This more participatory process resulted in recommendations including opening the parliamentary committee process and removing the judiciary from the control of the Ministry of Justice. Open meetings and seminars bringing together parliamentarians and NGOs on specific legislation are being held more frequently. Topics have included the family code, criminal procedure code, law on registering legal entities, and others. Three NGOs that received coalition-building technical assistance from USAID's local NGO resource center joined together to battle drug addiction among youth. Youth Initiative Center Ittifok, No Drugs, and Public Television SM1 created the coalition Youth Against Drugs to prevent further increases in drug addiction among youth. USAID-funded interactive training and roundtables by the coalition on the harmful effect of drugs has resulted in a marked decrease in drug addiction in the area. By working with political parties and the parliament, encouraging participation of and open meetings with NGOs in legislative decision making, USAID will help stabilize the post-conflict situation in Tajikistan. NGOs will have the necessary advocacy skills to help local communities address pressing social problems and mitigate the potential for conflict.

Quality Primary Health Care USAID's primary health care efforts in Tajikistan were strengthened with the opening of a new institutional partner under USAID's expanded health program – The Republican Training Center for Family Medicine in Dushanbe. In FY 2001 the USAID-funded partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Community Hospital in Boulder, Colorado provided equipment and skills-based training for primary care providers in family medicine and emergency medical services. USAID, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), conducted an assessment of TB prevention and control in Tajikistan to plan for a donation of TB drugs by the WHO Global Drug Funds (GDF). The assessment also led to the initiation of two pilot sites in Dushanbe for DOTS implementation. USAID helped the GOT successfully apply for funding from the Global Alliance Vaccines Initiative, which will extend universal Hepatitis B immunization at birth. Since independence, malaria in Tajikistan has reached epidemic proportions. Estimates are that the true number of cases is over 250,000. Since 1990, this is the first effort at reasonable estimation of malaria incidence in Tajikistan. WHO indicates that reported incidence of malaria dropped by 30 percent from 1997 to 2001, from 30,000 to 19,064. Research and training in HIV/AIDS surveillance have begun. USAID supported a study tour of government officials to a model Harm Reduction site in Lithuania; a Central Asian Condom Social Marketing Assessment and Workshop were conducted; and the Central Asian Initiative Conference on the Prevention of HIV/AIDS/STIs was held jointly with UNICEF and UNAIDS. Children and women of reproductive age in Varzob have benefited from improved reproductive health services for women. CARE's midwives and birth attendants see to the delivery of a high proportion of babies in Tajikistan, as hospitals and health facilities have fallen into extreme disrepair. Almost 5,000 women attended nurse-led education sessions on breast-feeding and infant feeding practices. USAID's efforts in child malnourishment surveillance and identification were supported through a new supplementary feeding center in Ayronom (with 16 more planned) using WFP food commodities.